

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 03459

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, WB, GW

SUBJECT: LORENZ KIDNAPPING

1. ON INSTRUCTIONS OF THE CHANCELLOR, STATE SECRETARY GEHLHOFF, OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CALLED IN THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND BRITISH AND FRENCH CHARGE LATE THIS AFTERNOON (MARCH 2) TO DISCUSS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LORENZ KIDNAPPING CASE. STRESSING THE NEED FOR STRICT SECRECY, HE ADDED SOME NEW DETAILS TO WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN AND PROVIDED SOME INSIGHT INTO FRG THINKING.

2. ACCORDING TO GEHLHOFF, THE CURRENT SITUATION IS THAT THE TWO RELEASED BERLIN ANARCHIST PRISONERS, WHO HAVE AGREED TO JOIN WITH THE TWO RELEASED PRISONERS FROM SOUTH GERMANY TO FLY FROM FRANKFURT IN THE BOEING 707 TO BE PROVIDED HAVE DEPARTED FROM WEST BERLIN IN A FRENCH PLANE. (THE FRENCH CHARGE NOTED THAT THE MYSTERE-20 BEING USED IS A MILITARY PLANE WITH MILITARY PILOTS WHO WILL, HOWEVER, BE DRESSED AS CIVILIANS. (RADIO REPORTS INDICATE THE PLANE HAS
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ARRIVED IN FRANKFURT.) FORMER MAYOR ALBERTZ HAS MADE

SOME DIFFICULTIES AFTER HIS ORIGINAL AGREEMENT TO COMPLY WITH THE KIDNAPPERS DEMAND THAT HE GO ALONG WITH THE RELEASED PRISONERS IN THE 707, SINCE HE FELT THAT ADEQUATE ASSURANCES ABOUT LOWENZ SAFETY AND EVENTUAL RELEASE HAVE NOT YET BEEN OBTAINED BUT, GEHLHOFF ADDED, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT HE WILL IN THE END BE WILLING TO PROCEED.

3. THE MEETING, CHAIRED IN BONN BY THE CHANCELLOR, AT NOON TODAY DID NOT ARRIVE AT FINAL AGREEMENT ON WHETHER THE BOEING 707 WHICH LUFTHANSA WILL PROVIDE IN FRANKFURT WILL ACTUALLY BE ALLOWED TO FLY AT 9:00 A.M. TOMORROW MORNING WHEN THE ULTIMATUM OF THE KIDNAPPERS EXPIRES. THE CHANCELLOR HAS CONVENED A FURTHER MEETING AT 10:00 P.M. THIS EVENING TO WHICH GOVERNING MAYOR SCHULTZ AND OTHER BERLIN OFFICIALS WILL COME TO MAKE A FINAL DECISION ON THIS POINT. THE BERLIN POLICE, GEHLHOFF CONTINUED, HAVE CEASED ANY OPEN SEARCH BY UNIFORMED PERSONNEL WHO ARE CONDUCTING ONLY NORMAL ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, POLICE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING ARE CONDUCTING SEARCH ACTIVITIES. THE POLICE THINK THEY KNOW IN WHICH DISTRICT OF THE CITY THE KIDNAPPERS ARE HIDING WITH LORENZ BUT THEY DO NOT AT THE PRESENT TIME KNOW THE PRECISE LOCATION.

4. A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT, ACCORDING TO GEHLHOFF, IS THAT A WOMAN KNOWN TO BE A CONTACT WITH THE JUNE 2 GROUP AND WHO WORKS AS A NURSE IN ANKARA WAS OBSERVED PROCEEDING TO SCHOENEFELD AIRPORT OUTSIDE OF EAST BERLIN ACCOMPANIED BY TWO MEN KNOWN TO BE ANARCHIST SYMPATHIZERS AS WELL AS TWO GREEKS KNOWN TO BE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP WOULD BE TO LOCATE A POSSIBLE COUNTRY FOR LANDING BY THE BOEING 707. THE FRG REP IN EAST BERLINGAUS WAS INSTRUCTED TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH GDR OFFICIALS WHO REACTED WITH SOME CONCERN THAT THE FRG WAS ASSUMING SUCH AN ACTIVE ROLE IN A WEST BERLIN PROBLEM BUT, ON CONDITION THAT THE INFORMATION BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY, DID DISCLOSE
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THAT THE GROUP IN QUESTION HAD DEPARTED BY AIR FROM SCHOENEFELD BOUND FOR SOFIA.

5. THE VIEW OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, GEHLHOFF SAID, IS THAT THE ANARCHIST GROUP INVOLVED CONSIDERS THIS TO BE A TEST CASE WHICH, IF IT SUCCEEDS, WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER KIDNAPPING ATTEMPTS IN THE FRG OR WEST BERLIN, PERHAPS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE

OBJECT WOULD BE TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF OTHER
ANARCHIST PRISONERS AND TO STRIKE CONTINUING BLOWS AT
THE PRESTIGE OF THE STATE. THAT SUCH PLANS FOR
ADDITIONAL KIDNAPPINGS EXIST IS KNOWN FROM INFORMA-

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TION OBTAINED FROM CERTAIN PRISONERS. AS SOON AS
LORENZ IS EITHER FREE OR HIS FATE DECIDED, THE
FRG AND WEST BERLIN AUTHORITIES WILL, OF COURSE,
TAKE ALL EXTRA PRECUATIONS POSSIBLE.

6. AN ADDITIONAL CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT, ACCORD-
ING TO GEHLHOFF, IS THAT THE SOVIETS AND THE GDR
MAY TRY TO USE THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO ATTACK THE
STATUS OF WEST BERLIN. THUS, ON FRIDAY THE GDR
TEMPORARILY ADDED CERTAIN CONTROLS ON THE ACCESS
ROUTES. HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD LEAVE IT TO THE THREE
ALLIED POWERS TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY THOUGHT IT
DESIRABLE TO GO TO THE SOVIETS NOW OR AT SOME LATER
POINT ON THIS MATTERS. THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

SUGGESTED THAT THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY REAL GROUND FOR GOING TO THE SOVIETS AT PRESENT. GEHLHOFF SAID HE AGREED, BUT WAS MERELY EXPRESSING THE CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

7. IN THE SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION, GEHLHOFF CONFIRMED
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THAT THE KIDNAPPERS HAVE NOT YET INDICATED WHERE THEY WANT THE BOEING 707 TO GO ONCE IT LEAVES GERMANY. THEY HAVE SAID THAT WHEN ALBERTZ RETURNS AND REPORTS BACK THAT THE RELEASED PRISONERS HAVE ARRIVED SAFELY AT THEIR DESTINATION, THEY WILL THEN DISCUSS HOW AND WHEN LORENZ WILL BE FREED. POLICE ATTEMPTS TO QUERY THEM ON THE MODALITIES OF RELEASE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. AS YET THERE HAVE BEEN NO COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE KIDNAPPERS OTHER THAN IN WRITING PLUS TWO TELEPHONE CALLS TO INDICATE WHERE THE WRITTEN MESSAGES WOULD BE FOUND. GEHLHOFF MADE THE POINT THAT LORENZ WILL MOST PROBABLY BE KEPT DRUGGED SO THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE HIS KIDNAPPERS. HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN CONSCIOUS ENOUGH TO WRITE THE TWO SHORT MESSAGES WHICH THE POLICE BELIEVE ARE AUTHENTIC.

7. AN UNRESOLVED POINT IS WHERE THE ACTUAL KIDNAPPERS WILL HIDE OUT, SINCE THEY APPARENTLY ARE NOT PLANNING TO LEAVE GERMANY WITH THE BOEING 707. SINCE THEY APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HIDING FROM THE WEST BERLIN POLICE FOR SOME YEARS ALTHOUGH WANTED, THEY MAY SIMPLY GO UNDERGROUND, GEHLHOFF SURMISED. THEY ARE INTELLIGENT AND RUTHLESS. THEIR MODUS OPERANDI IN THE PRESENT CASE HAS SO FAR BEEN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE. HE NOTED THAT THE JUNE 2 MOVEMENT IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH THE BAADER MEINHOFF GANG, THE REFUSAL OF THE CONVICTED BAADER MEINHOFF LAWYER MAHLER TO GO ALONG WITH THE FLIGHT IS INDICATIVE OF THIS.

8. COMMENT: THE FRG AUTHORITIES FEEL THEMSELVES TORN BETWEEN THEIR NEED TO SAVE LORENZ (AN OBJECTIVE WHICH HAS THE SUPPORT OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES) AND THE NECESSITY TO SAFEGUARD THE PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY OF THE STATE. IT IS CLEAR THAT MASSIVE POLICE ACTION IS BEING PREPARED FOR THE PERIOD AFTER THE FATE OF LORENZ IS DECIDED, BUT THERE IS GENUINE CONCERN THAT THIS MAY BE ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A SERIES OF KIDNAPPINGS DIRECTED AT OTHER PROMINENT POLITICIANS OR PERSONALITIES IN EITHER THE FRG OR WEST BERLIN.
HILLENBRAND

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